



Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

January 2024

Pearson Edexcel Extended Project Qualification in
Investigation/Field Study (P302)

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Student Performance

This unit is differentiated from Unit 1 by the expectation of a more scientific and mathematical approach and thus the conclusion should involve the rejection or acceptance of the starting hypothesis at a declared level of significance.

Suitability of work submitted

A good variety of investigation topics were submitted and many Investigations exhibiting mathematical analysis of large data sets. There was some evidence of a taught skills course by Centres. Referencing has improved, though some Investigations still tended to lack a structured bibliography showing analysis of a wide range of types of secondary source. Several Centres allow candidates to produce a list of references at the end and credit this as a bibliography. Citations within the text, so that sources are linked to each piece of information, were lacking in some Investigations moderated.

It is acceptable for candidates to receive guidance and supervision from a tutor, but it is expected that, to access the higher mark positions in AO1, the candidate will refine their hypothesis or research question independently and show an independent self-reflective journey.

This series, as with last series too, Project Proposal Forms were completed to a much better standard. It was pleasing to see the majority of Proposal Forms being signed off in advance of the research journey, though some are still completed in retrospect.

Where a focused question was chosen and a decent amount of data gathered, candidates were able to produce detailed conclusions. Projects based on mainly qualitative results are more limited and might be better submitted as Dissertations. This series there were a few Centres where the candidates might have been better matched to Unit 1.

The quantity of independent data collected does affect the quality of statistical analysis; more mathematical testing was seen in good projects including Spearman's Rank. However, some candidates still limit their analysis to bar and pie charts, often with little comment or going no further than finding averages.

The majority of projects were generally well-structured and showed clear headings, labelling and illustrations. However, projects were sometimes hard to follow and would benefit from including a more in-depth introduction to set the scene as to what is being tackled and use more headings and subheadings and illustrations; this is not an essay. The more complex the subject, the clearer the communication should be. Too many projects assume prior knowledge.

Assessment Evidence

Questions/hypotheses were generally more focused. There were some good Activity logs, though not all centres used the Edexcel form, and some were still too factual and brief. A

thoughtful log, showing the iterative nature of the project with decisions made and problems overcome add marks in both AO1 and AO4.

Well-structured and analysed bibliographies are still a rarity, and this is still the biggest area for improvement, though referencing in general was better. Few centres appear to be teaching students to use the easily available citation creation tools. Annotations on the scripts were more common and very helpful. The number of Secondary sources should still be significant in this Unit. Candidates are being credited with Band 3 marks despite only a dozen or so sources and a lack of breadth of type of source used.

It was pleasing to see the greater use, by Centres, of the Oral Presentation Record Forms. This was useful and meant AO4 marks could be supported with confidence.

Centre Performance

There was good evidence of consistent application of the marking grids so that the ranking of scripts was in agreement with that resulting from moderation in most cases. This year there were fewer incorrect mark additions were seen and only a couple of Centres did not submit work from highest and lowest students. There were some incomplete samples submitted and this was often due to Gateway showing only a selection of the required candidates 'ticked'. If a Centre has 10 or less candidates, they should all be uploaded on LWT Portal for moderation.

The best Investigations resulted from wide ranging activities carried out over an extended period with development, analysis and thought visible in the journey itself rather than just at the end, facilitated by constant Centre monitoring. Short duration tasks carried out unsupervised (including out of Centre) can lead to single data sets and 'closed' projects.

Clear focused testable hypotheses mean that high marks could be gained throughout. Sample sizes must be large enough to allow mathematical analysis and some statistical significance in findings to be present. Presentation of data in bar graphs or pie charts alone is insufficient at this level 3; trends and correlations or testing must be carried out. Where Spearman's Rank or similar were used, it was not always clear that the method, or the results, were understood.

There was some evidence this year of Taught Courses having been implemented by Centres. It must be noted the need for Taught Course input regarding confusion about references and bibliographies, secondary source analysis and critical selection of sources, questionnaire design and the mathematical methods needed. Where projects were started late in the year and where there was no evidence of skills teaching, these rarely produced high mark projects. The need for a full preparation period and completed proposals being signed off before the project commences must be emphasised. In AO2, the level of referencing and secondary source analysis expected is no less than in Unit 1.

A small number of Centres are still submitting after deadline. This delays the moderation process. Samples were in general well presented. Fewer projects are being bulked out with

complete sets of questionnaire responses, although this was the case in a small number of Investigations.

The degree and depth of annotations varied. Annotation needs to be further encouraged. Internal moderation was evident from some Centres, but it should be stressed that this is vital where more than one assessor is involved. Internal moderation is also advised where different tasks are carried out.

Topics with a clear testable hypothesis are ideal and if questionnaires are used the structure of questions and the 'population' questioned must be thought through. It was good to see, in some Investigations, risk assessments being carried out and this can be essential in some data gathering settings.

